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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; October 26, 2009

TOP HEADLINES

Chosun Ilbo, Hankyoreh Shinmun, All TVs
Rapid Spread of New Flu; U.S. Declares Swine Flu Emergency, and ROK
Reports 3,000 Infections a Day

JoongAng Ilbo
At Least 136 Dead in Worst Bomb Attack in Baghdad
in More Than Two Years

Dong-a Ilbo
[N.](#) Korean Defectors Fail to Assimilate Into ROK Society

Hankook Ilbo, Seoul Shinmun
President Lee: "N. Korea's Intentions Remain Unclear. The North has
Shown Few Signs of Making a Decision
to Give up Nuclear Ambitions"

Segye Ilbo
War of Nerves between U.S. and N. Korea; U.S.,
North Hold Talks in New York, and U.S. Treasury Blacklists
[N.](#) Korean Bank for Arms Deals

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

President Lee Myung-bak, in an Oct. 25 luncheon at the ASEAN+3
Summit in Thailand, said that North Korea's intentions remain
unclear and that the North has shown few signs of making a decision
to give up its nuclear ambitions. (All)

Lee Dong-kwan, Senior Presidential Secretary for Public Relations,
said on Oct. 24 that, "There will be neither behind-the-scenes
negotiations nor s-e-c-r-e-t agreement with the North" about an
inter-Korean summit." (All)

According to Stars and Stripes, Adm. Michael Mullen, Chairman of the
U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said during his recent visit to Seoul
that the U.S. is considering deploying part of USFK to the Middle
East in coming years. (Dong-a)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Ri Gun, Deputy North Korean Negotiator to the Six-Party Talks, met in New York on Oct. 24 with Sung Kim, Special Envoy for the Six-Party Talks. (All)

On Oct. 23, the U.S. Treasury Department blacklisted a North Korean bank as a proliferator of weapons of mass destruction for its involvement in exporting ballistic missiles to Iran. (Dong-a, Segye, Seoul)

MEDIA ANALYSIS

-N. Korea

The Oct. 24 meeting in New York between Ri Gun, Deputy North Korean Negotiator to the Six-Party Talks, and Sung Kim, U.S. Special Envoy for the Six-Party Talks, received wide press coverage today.

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo described this meeting as a prelude to full-fledged bilateral talks between the two countries. JoongAng observed: "One of the scenarios being discussed for bilateral

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U.S.-North Korea talks is that Special Representative for North Korea Policy Stephen Bosworth ... would meet in Pyongyang or a third country with North Korea's First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok-ju. Should Bosworth go to Pyongyang, he may meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il to deliver a personal letter from President Obama."

In an editorial, JoongAng argued: "It appears that North Korea's (recent actions) are aimed at easing international sanctions which have intensified and disrupting cooperation between the ROK, the U.S. and Japan. Following the North's second nuclear test, the three countries implemented a two-track approach of 'pressure and dialogue' to resolve the nuclear issue. This approach should be maintained until the North takes irreversible steps toward denuclearization. ... The North's current flurry of peace overtures should not in any way lead to a hasty lifting of sanctions against the country."

President Lee Myung-bak was widely quoted as saying in an Oct. 25 luncheon at the ASEAN+3 Summit in Thailand: "North Korea's intentions remain unclear. The North has shown few signs of making a decision to give up its nuclear ambitions."

OPINIONS/EDITORIALS

CONCERNS OVER U.S. BEEF

(Seoul Shinmun, October 26, 2009, page 30)

By Lee Jun-han, Political Science Professor of the University of Incheon

During a national policy coordination meeting held at the Central Government Complex, the new ROK prime minister threw out a question, "Why isn't imported U.S. beef used in the cafeteria of the government office? During the National Assembly's audit that ensued, clues (why the U.S. beef is not used in the government office) were revealed. Until now, imported U.S. beef including intestines has been inspected only with the naked eye without undergoing tissue inspection. This U.S. beef has been served to auxiliary police who have no choice or power (to refuse the U.S. beef.) More surprisingly, a considerable amount of U.S. beef has been consumed in the Taereung National Village where Korean national players exercise with the goal of enhancing Korea's standing in international sports.

Living in the U.S. as a researcher, I go to grocery stores on weekends, where I often look at nicely packaged beef only with a watering mouth without buying it. When I was studying in the U.S. before, I couldn't afford to buy beef. But now I don't feel like (buying it), knowing that U.S. beef may cause health problems. The U.S. beef imported to the ROK comes from cows more than 30 months old. In contrast, beef distributed in the U.S. is mostly meat from cattle under 20 months of age and is considered safe. I say to myself hypnotically that U.S. beef is safe, but I can't dispel my concerns easily.

My anxiety further intensified after I read a terrifying article about U.S. beef. According to the New York Times, a 22-year old young American woman suffered from diarrhea and spasms after eating a hamburger. She fell into a coma for 9 weeks. Her mother had purchased ground beef and made a hamburger. But it turned out that the beef was contaminated with E coli. The woman became paraplegic due to nerve damage. I suddenly felt my legs numb upon recalling that I had had a hamburger at a (McDonalds) fast-food chain a few days ago.

I cannot but suspect that good-quality beef isn't always used for hamburgers. Allegedly, ground beef sometimes includes intestines or other parts, or even bones. Also, other kinds of meat in addition to beef, and beef from other countries may be mixed into the ground beef.

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This October alone, at least three recalls of beef products were announced in the U.S. Not only ground beef but also other kinds of products were subject to the recalls. The recalls were issued because beef products may have been contaminated with E. coli or Specified Risk Materials (SRM) were not removed. The problem is that one of the U.S. firms that issued a recall in October exports beef to the ROK. One way or another, U.S. beef is fueling consumer anxiety both inside and outside the U.S.

In the ROK, U.S. imports increased until October in 2008, but after that, they began decreasing as the global economic crisis hurt the ROK economy and drove up the exchange rate. Weak consumer confidence in U.S. beef was also at play. A U.S. beef importer, who sued MBC's "PD Diary," an investigative television newsmagazine, and an actress (for allegedly misleading the public into a boycott of U.S. beef products and damaging sales), argues that he incurred a loss of more than 400 billion won due to candlelight protests. In this situation, it is evident that the U.S. livestock industry has failed to achieve its target profits and market expansion in the ROK.

On October 10, Japan banned all U.S. beef imports from a U.S. meatpacker, saying that bovine spinal columns, which are banned under a bilateral agreement, were found in beef shipments from the plant. The Hatoyama Administration strongly said that it did not plan to renegotiate to ease the import terms as the U.S. demanded. In Taiwan, there is no report, either, that the nation's import terms for U.S. beef have been eased as much as those of the ROK. In the middle of the candlelight protests, ROKG officials said that they would take action after watching the results of U.S. beef trade negotiations of Japan or Taiwan. But what are they doing now? Isn't this the time for the Prime Minister to find a solution at a fundamental level, rather than at the level of a cafeteria? Doesn't he have to find a solution in which Korean consumers enjoy "cheap and quality" U.S. beef with confidence, thereby reducing the loss of ROK and U.S. industries and patching up divisions in public opinion?

A CHANCE TO BRING TRANSPARENCY TO INTER-KOREAN DEALINGS
(Chosun Ilbo, October 26, 2009, page 35)

Cheong Wa Dae spokesman Lee Dong-kwan on Saturday said, "As we have already stated, we will not pursue a summit with any hidden political agenda." Briefing reporters on rumors of a possible inter-Korean summit, Lee said any such meeting must be in line with

the genuine interests of the public and help in the resolution of the nuclear impasse. "I stress again it is our government's unchanging stance that we will not hold an inter-Korean summit that will simply end in a meeting of the leaders," Lee said. He added Seoul has no fantasies about such a meeting and pledged the government would be clear and open about any arrangements when the time comes.

Many have grown skeptical about the value of a summit after the first two were held without even touching on the main issue of the North Korean nuclear program. As a result, President Lee Myung-bak pledged during his election campaign to be transparent about the agenda and arrangement process.

Considering the nature of inter-Korean relations, it could be difficult to reveal the entire process of arranging a summit. During its historic contact with Beijing, the White House kept the process s-e-c-r-e-t even from its own diplomats. The transparency the public wants to see is not about revealing every little detail of the process but means that they want the leaders of the two countries to be honest about matters like the nuclear issue. North Korean leader Kim Jong-il has said denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula was his father's "last wish." But there is no point trying to make such rhetoric look like some sort of major progress in the nuclear dismantlement process.

The North Korean nuclear problem is at the root of inter-Korean relations. The ROK is the only country that is directly threatened

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by North Korea's nuclear weapons. The reason the North insists on keeping its nuclear weapons is that it is afraid of being defeated and absorbed by the ROK.

Some people here fear that North Korea and the U.S. may leave the ROK out of any nuclear negotiations and are desperately hoping for an inter-Korean summit. These fears are probably at the bottom of the rumors about a possible summit. They are based on the erroneous belief that nuclear discussions should be conducted between North Korea and the U.S., while the ROK should work to create an amicable atmosphere for such discussions by promising economic aid to and holding a summit with North Korea.

But even if the U.S. and North Korea do hold nuclear talks, key issues including turning the armistice into a peace treaty must involve the ROK. As long as Seoul and Washington maintain a close alliance, the North would not even be able to consider leaving the ROK out. North Korea knows this, and that is why it is hoping for an inter-Korean summit.

This is an opportunity to bring greater transparency to inter-Korean negotiations, which have been flawed for the last 20 years, and to set a framework for regular talks between the two Koreas and the U.S. The next inter-Korean summit must be a decisive step in that direction.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.)

FIRST U.S. - N. KOREA CONTACT SINCE THE LAUNCH OF THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION SHOULD LEAD TO THE NORTH'S RETURN TO SIX-PARTY TALKS

(JoongAng Ilbo, October 23, 2009, page 46)

Sung Kim, Special Envoy for the Six-Party Talks and Ri Gun, Deputy North Korean Negotiator to the Six-Party Talks had a meeting in New York on October 24. This is the first U.S.-North Korea contact since the Obama Administration took office. The meeting was held while the two countries are still engaging in confrontation following North Korea's second nuclear test and missile launches and the UN Security Council's resolution condemning these acts. The unofficial working-level contact came even though the U.S. has been demanding as preconditions for U.S.-North Korea talks that North Korea demonstrate its willingness to achieve denuclearization and promise to rejoin the Six-Party Talks. It is likely that the two

officials discussed several issues including North Korea's return to the Six-Party Talks, its willingness to pursue denuclearization, U.S.-North Korea bilateral talks and a U.S.-envisioned comprehensive approach for resolving the nuclear issue. Ri Gun will also participate in talks on the North Korean nuclear issue, which will be held in New York on October 30. Attention is turning to whether the first one-on-one U.S.-North Korea contact will lead to the North's return to the Six-Party Talks.

Recently, North Korea has mounted charm offensives at the U.S., the ROK and Japan. In a series of conciliatory moves, the North invited Special Representative for North Korea Policy Stephen Bosworth to visit Pyongyang, hinted at the possibility that it may rejoin the Six-Party Talks during a visit by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, and proposed inter-Korean talks. However, it remains unclear whether Pyongyang is really willing to give up its nuclear weapons program. ROK President Lee Myung-bak said on October 25 that the North has shown few signs of making a decision to give up its nuclear ambitions while Pyongyang insists that it intends to pursue denuclearization through nuclear disarmament talks with the U.S. Therefore, we can only question as to North Korea's true intentions behind the peace gestures. It appears that North Korea's (recent actions) are aimed at easing international sanctions which have intensified and disrupting cooperation between the ROK, the U.S. and Japan.

Following the North's second nuclear test, the three countries implemented a two-track approach of 'pressure and dialogue' to

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resolve the nuclear issue. This approach should be maintained until the North takes irreversible steps toward denuclearization. Depending on the situation, equilibrium may shift between pressure and dialogue. The North's current flurry of peace overtures should not in any way lead to a hasty lifting of sanctions against the country. Former U.S. President George W. Bush lifted sanctions on the Banco Delta Asia (BDA) bank due to North Korea's relentless demands and made progress on the Six-Party Talks. However, this only resulted in North Korea carrying out a second nuclear test. Now, North Korea is openly claiming itself as a nuclear state and scheming to make it an established fact. This should not be allowed. Ultimately, we should persuade the North to abandon its nuclear weapons. This is not an easy goal, given the North Korean leadership's unwavering commitment to nuclear development. After all, the North Korean nuclear issue can be resolved only when the entire international community, including all Six Party Talks member countries, makes consistent and enduring efforts (to stop the North from nuclear development.)

FEATURES -----

BOSWORTH VISITS PYONGYANG WITH OBAMA'S LETTER? KIM JONG-IL VISITS CHINA?
(JoongAng Ilbo, October 26, 2009, Pages 4-5)

By Reporter Ye Young-joon

After North Korea's charm offensive, how will things pan out?

Contact made between Ri Gun and Sung Kim on October 24

Following a s-e-c-r-e-t inter-Korean meeting, the first contact between North Korean and U.S. officials since the launch of the Obama Administration was made in New York on October 24. Deputy North Korean Negotiator to the Six-Party Talks Ri Gun, who is visiting the U.S., and U.S. Special Envoy for the Six-Party Talks Sung Kim had a meeting for about an hour at the U.S. mission to the UN. Ri, who arrived in the U.S. to attend the Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue set for October 26 in San Diego, is expected to meet with Kim a few more times during his stay until the end of this month.

The meeting between the two officials can be seen as a prelude to full-fledged bilateral talks between the U.S. and North Korea. An

(ROKG) official well-versed in the North Korean nuclear issue predicted, "Since the U.S. has already decided to have direct dialogue with North Korea, the U.S., during the Ri-Kim meeting, is expected to check Pyongyang's position and determine the venue and timing for bilateral talks with the North. The date (for the talks) is likely to be after mid-November." One of the scenarios being discussed for bilateral U.S.-North Korea talks is that Special Representative for North Korea Policy Stephen Bosworth, who has already been invited by the North, would meet in Pyongyang or a third country with North Korea's First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok-ju. Should Bosworth go to Pyongyang, he may meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il to deliver a personal letter from President Obama. Under another scenario, North Korea would return to the Six-Party Talks, depending on the outcome of U.S.-North Korea dialogue. The first contact between the U.S. and North Korea was made possible because North Korea's charm offensive squared with the U.S.'s "two-track" approach of dialogue and sanctions (toward the North.) In early October when Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited Pyongyang, North Korean leader Kim Jong-il had sent him a message that "We hope to improve relations with the ROK and Japan." The recent inter-Korean s-e-c-r-e-t contact in Singapore should also be seen in this context. North Korea-Japan negotiations are also expected to resume now that the new Japanese government has taken office. The efforts to create a favorable atmosphere for talks before the dialogue with the U.S. is consistent with North Korea's negotiating style.

It is also possible that North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il will visit

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China. A diplomatic source said, "We believe that during his visit to the North, Premier Wen invited Kim." There is also speculation that, when Kim Yang-gon, head of the Unification Front Department of North Korea's Workers' Party, appeared in Beijing last week, one of his missions was to discuss North Korean leader Kim's visit to China. Kim Yang-gon, who is in charge of relations with China's Communist Party, has coordinated summit diplomacy between North Korea and China, which was restored in the 2000s. An (ROK) government official noted, "It appears that North Korea's charm offensive is also aimed at undermining cooperation among the five parties and taking 'the teeth out of the sanctions.'" To this end, North Korea should first win over China. Strengthening relations with China would also be advantageous for North Korea at the bargaining table. When it comes to inter-Korean dialogue, a prevalent view is that since the s-e-c-r-e-t meeting has now been made public, it may be difficult, for the time being, to restore the momentum (for dialogue). Observers say, however, that the reason why the ROKG has not disclosed its lines of contact with the North is that it wants to keep the lines open and deal with future developments in a flexible manner.

STEPHENS